



A dream of Sweet Summer by **kate langdon**

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Summary: Her dress reminded Steve of a choir robe but she didn't seem to mind it. And he didn't mind the view of her red bra from under the thin white linen. - "I was a dick. A complete dick. Not just with how I treated you back then but about... about the whole thing. I never should'a said what I did. I just- I wasn't ready." "Me neither. We were too young." - Steve/OC

1. The Circle

This is the companion piece to my other fic *Crimson Wings* (Billy/OC) but it can be read alone. It's set just before season 1 (an entire year before *Crimson Wings*).

Special thanks to the editor: *ilypopxtart333* ! You were amazing

I do not own ST but I wish I did. Who doesn't?

Please enjoy!

PART ONE

THE FALL

They met the summer before her sister died, when the leaves were still green, yet the weather was growing colder; a tell-tale sign of summer's end. In the winter and after *it* had happened, they carried on with their lives separately, alone as many people are. After the next summer, one filled with lust and betrayal, they found each other as the frost settled on dead petals.

CHAPTER 1: THE CIRCLE

August 1984

Moss colored smoke filled the cabin and spoke of drug use as it thickly swirled into the partygoers' lungs, adding to the toxicity of the town. The punch bowl reminded Steve of biology last year, when he had been made – along with the rest of his class – to dissect a frog and when he had punctured its small dead body with the stainless-steel scalpel, rancid blood mixed with stomach acid had spurted out, staining his white polo shirt. The punch bowl reminded Steve of that exact color. But he still drank it.

Jude, at the very moment Steve had shuddered from the frog blood swirling into his stomach, had been called over by Freddie who sat in a circle with six others – Freddie's boyfriend, Betty, Gloria, Todd, Carol and Tommy H. Jude joined them, nervous – it was, after all her first teen rager. She dodged through drunk dancers as she made her

way to the circle. Once there, she sat cross-legged and adjusted the hem of her white dress so that only the edges of her calves showed.

"Hey, Steve!" Tommy H. shouted, voice guffawing over to him who still lamely grimaced at the punch bowl, empty cup in hand. "Steve, get over here!"

Steve dropped the plastic cup on the marble counter – which was already overflowing with used cups and bottles stolen from the liquor cabinets of multiple of the guests' parents – and walked over to them. When spotted by Jude, her palms became sweaty. For Jude, it was undeniable how handsome he was, yet she was still more swayed by Todd, who sat across from her with his eyes bloodshot and glazed over. It wasn't puzzling as to who smoked most of the weed before the stash had gone dry.

"So, we're playing spin the bottle." Carol said.

"Yep." Tommy H. nodded, dumb and excited.

Freddie's boyfriends told her to go first. She span it, her cheeks the color of pale strawberries as it landed on Carol. They'd pecked nervously, but at the cheering of Freddie's boyfriend and Tommy H., Freddie had deepened it.

Jude looked away, her own cheeks warming as her eyes latched onto Todd, his blue eyes and blonde hair drawing her in, though he was watching the girls make out with an open mouth, not drawn to Jude in the slightest. She thought he looked like an angel, like one of the one's from Mother's paintings of whatever religious icon she had chosen to mirror that month.

It went like this; they each took turns, and each shared saliva – Tommy had landed on Gloria, Gloria had landed on Todd (and Jude had scowled through the slobbery duration of it), Todd landed on Carol but before they kissed, she suggested a change.

Carol spoke; "Hey, how about we switch it up a little?"

"And do what?" Todd asked.

"Seven minutes in Heaven." Carol said, her head tilted upward as if

she were a Queen ruling over her court.

Heads around the circle nodded as they gave their affirmations.

"And I feel we've all been quite rude. Jude, right?" She said, pretty blue eyes piercing into Jude.

"Judy." She said, before biting her lip. All eyes in the circle were on her.

"I've never seen you at a party before. This your first?" Carol asked, calculating.

She nodded as pink filled her cheeks.

"How about we give you the first go then." She nodded at me, and a killer smile formed.

"Uh, sure." She nodded again.

"Go on, Judy!" Freddie's boyfriend said, urging her to take her turn.

She reached out, ignoring the shivers that prickled down her spine like a thousand pine needles. Her fingers met the cold glass and she span it. Her eyes nervously darted at Todd. But as the bottle slowed, it passed over him and went to the next person. Her eyes tentatively travelled up and found Steve.

The circle cheered, Tommy H. being the loudest of the bunch with his voice matching the pounding music coming from Tina's Hi-Fi stereo stack.

What happened next was quick, blurry. The girls dragged Jude to the bathroom and Steve was thrown in too. The door slammed shut. The music vibrated along the floor, like the pounding that came from Jude's chest.

The tiny bathroom had one light source; a dull almost pink lightbulb coming from above the mirror. She studied their dull figures – Steve's was much taller and thinner than her own – which were almost void of all detail, more liken to silhouettes but there was one thing she could make out; his eyes. At the very moment she discerned this, his

eyes met hers in the reflection. She looked away, cheeks hotter than before.

Neither of them knew what to say. Then Steve thought of something;

"I don't think I've ever seen you before." He said, leaning against the counter. "You just move here?"

"Um, no." Jude said before she shrugged. "We've lived here since I was born."

"We?" He sat back against the sink.

"My parents. My sister." She said. "Um, you might know my sister, she's in the same grade as you."

"Really?" He raised his eyebrows. "Who?"

"Barbara Holland?"

"Uh, no, I don't know her, sorry."

"That's fine." She shrugged again.

"Judy, right?" He asked, a small smile playing at his lips.

She nodded.

"Judy Holland." He said, testing the name on his tongue. "Nice to meet you. I'm Ste-"

"Steve." She interrupted before she tucked a stray curl behind her ear. "Sorry. It's just- I already know you."

The curl she had tucked behind her ear came free and Steve thought about putting it back for her, but something about her hair being so out of place made her seem all the more appealing.

"So, what grade are *you* in?" He asked, nodding at her. "I mean, you already know everything about me."

Jude laughed, her cheeks heating before she told him the answer.

A thump against the bathroom door interrupted them and a booming voice told them to 'get on with it' came from behind the thin wood. It was Tommy's voice, Steve realised.

"Start making out already!" Another voice joined in with the cheering. Jude frowned; the voice sounded like Todd.

"You've only got five minutes left." Tommy H. said, before he thumped the door twice more. "I'm not hearing any moaning yet!"

Jude's eyes widened, and Steve gave a wry chuckle.

"They're right." He said before he stepped forward. "We should probably get a move on."

Her knees hit the edge of the bathtub. He stepped closer. His breath tickled Jude's rosy cheeks, cooling them; yet somehow making them feel even hotter. He tucked the stray copper curl from her brow and tucked it behind her ear.

He caught her eyes just as his lips longed to catch hers.

"Can I kiss you now?" He said.

"Yes, please." She said.

Her eyes drifted shut as his lips descended.

The kiss was as soft as silk, but quickly became harder, demanding, controlling. He had sensed how inexperienced Jude was, yet he'd been patient as she learnt how to smooth her tongue over his. His hands soon grazed over her shoulders, her back, her bottom. He'd held her there and groped her for a few lingering moments before deepening the kiss and moving his hands to wrap around her waist, pulling her budding breasts flush against his chest.

All the while Jude had grasped onto his shoulders and felt the hard heat beneath his shirt. Her fingers had explored the heated flesh of his neck before they took refuge in his thick hair, tangling the brown tresses between her fingers. A small whine left her lips.

The door opened to loud cheers of 'King Steve'.

They parted, lips swollen and red.

And just like that, Heaven was over.

September 1984

Where is she? Jude asked herself, arms rubbing at her shoulders as her breath swirled off into the night air. She stood at the curb outside the movie theatre, wondering when her sister was going to pick her up. Her eyes desperately searched for her sister's dinky little car and wondered if she'd ever come. She'd promised to pick her up after all. But she was missing.

She'd just seen *All the Right Moves* with Freddie, whose mouth had gaped in childlike wonder whenever Lea Thompson (her new icon) had come on screen and once it had finished, they'd walked outside, finding that the sun had vanished leaving the sky an inky blue.

Mrs. Buell – Freddie's mother – had been waiting across the street in her convertible sports car, the one Freddie said her parents fought about. She was ten minutes early to pick her up and had been kind enough to offer Jude a ride home. She had declined though, insisting that Barb would be there soon. As Jude shook her head, she decided that her decision had been a crappy mistake and thought that perhaps if she had agreed to Mrs. Buell, then she would have been home by now.

Jude looked down the road again and practically willed Barb's stodgy car to appear. This did not happen. She was nowhere to be found. *Barb is so dead when I get home*, Jude thought, lips pursed and eyes narrowed to slits.

She glanced down at her watch. It was 8:53. Her curfew was at 'ten sharp'. Her father had made her repeat 'ten sharp' back to him as her mother checked her face for any obvious signs of makeup. There had been occasions when she had been sent back into the house for applying her mascara too thickly or her lipstick too red.

Jude cursed at herself as the wind picked up, causing her dress to flutter around her calves like curtains billowing in a light summer breeze. But it was not summer anymore. The warmth which had

soaked into Hawkins like smooth honey was gone now, leaving behind grey clouds and frosted grass. She shivered as she let her eyes squeeze shut, trying to assess her situation. She was stranded and cold and didn't even have enough change for a payphone. The only lucky thing about her situation was that she had enough time to walk home before 'ten sharp'. And so, she began to walk – cursing at herself once more as her new loafers began to rub at the soft skin of her ankles with every step.

As Jude reached the emptied Maple Street, a car slowed before making a U-turn and pulling up next to her. In a second of dread, she thought it could be some creep pulling up to kidnap her. Darker thoughts spread like cancer in her mind. She inhaled deeply and reminded herself that this was Hawkins. Nothing bad ever happened here. But, what if it was about to? What if she was really about to be kidnapped? She thought of mom. And of pop. And Barb too. They would be torn up and would never stop looking for their missing daughter. Jude knew Barb would blame herself for it.

Jude stared at the car with the weight of trepidation heavy in her gut as the window inched its way down. She could see a figure, but her eyes hadn't adjusted to the darkness filling the car yet. A clicking noise was made, and the driver lit up. Her eyes found the flame first. It flickered and cast shades of orange around the inside of the car. The orange light latched onto someone's face as they brought the Zippo lighter to their cigarette.

"Hey, Judy." He said, lips around the cigarette.

Jude shivered at his voice which was supple as sin.

It was Steve Harrington.

"Wanna ride?" He asked.

"...Yes, please." She said, composing herself.

She opened the door and climbed into the passenger seat, heart pounding from being close to him again. She told him her address and he started driving. She looked to his hands on the steering wheel and thought of how they had grazed over her shoulders, back, and

then her bottom in Tina's bathroom a few weeks earlier. Jude began to get paranoid over whether he could see the blush that sat in her skin, though fortunately the car was pitch-dark, the only light coming from the streetlamps they passed and the end of Steve's cigarette.

"I didn't know you smoked." Jude said.

"I guess it turns out you don't know everything about me after all." He said, the cigarette bobbing between his lips with every word.

"I'm sorry if... if before at the party- if I was a bit creepy. I mean, everyone knows you anyway."

"Everyone, huh?"

She looked at him in exasperation not fully grasping that he was playing with her.

"You're King Steve." She told him as if he hadn't heard that phrase before. And he had heard it plenty, probably too much, what with his greater than average ego.

"Am I?" He asked.

She starred at him. A puff of smoke left his lips. Jude wondered what he meant by that and who else he could possibly be. She smiled as the thought of him really being her kidnapper crossed her mind.

"Why're you smiling?" Steve asked, his own smile spreading across his cheeks.

"Nothing." Jude said, biting her bottom lip.

"Oh, really?" He asked. "Pretty smile like that? You'd think there was a cute boy around or something."

He looked behind him then, pretending to search for a cute boy in the backseat. As if he wasn't aware that *he* was the cute boy. *Cocky bastard*, Jude thought, as she rolled her eyes at his show.

"I was smiling because when you were pulling up beside me- I don't know, it's weird..." She trailed off, glancing down at her lap and

feeling sheepish before looking back up to him.

His eyebrows raised for her to continue.

"I thought you were going to kidnap me." She confessed.

"What?" He smirked, but his eyebrows were drawn together.

Jude grimaced as the familiar weight of embarrassment crushed her throat and sped her heart up.

"It was stupid." She admitted before shaking her head. "Sorry."

"Don't apologise." Steve bit his lip as he looked at her. "And it's not stupid. You were just scared." He glanced back at the road, then locked his eyes back onto hers before he continued. "And don't worry, I'm not gonna kidnap you... not unless you want me to."

Jude felt her cheeks turn apple-red. She hoped it was a pretty blush rather than the blotchy kind that too often spread down her neck and onto her chest.

"I wouldn't mind." She barely noticed the words leave her lips. She could feel birds beat in her chest, wings beating as they tried to escape only to find they were trapped by her ribcage.

"How 'bout we find a place to park." He asked, though it didn't sound like a question.

Jude wanted more than anything in that moment to say 'yes' or nod her head and blush prettily but the dashboard in his car read 9:30, which left half an hour in between then and 'ten sharp'.

"I can't." She told him, and at the risk of sounding like a square, she added, "Curfew's at 10."

"Yeah, well that sucks." He said, eyes focused on the spot his headlights lit up.

He breathed in deeply, then held the breath for a long second before he exhaled. He glanced back me, a plan forming in those darkly mischievous eyes.

"We can meet up another time, right?" He asked, hopeful.

"Um..."

"Come on. We'll have fun."

She licked her lips. He smiled, trying to persuade her. Jude smiled back, loving how in that moment, he was focused only on her.

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He pulled up to the house and parked. Jude looked at the time (9:51) and a huff of breath left her. She wished she could've been more rebellious – she could've parked with him and then when she arrived home to angry parents, she could've lied and said she was so late because Barb hadn't picked her up. Why did she only come up with that now?

"Well, we're here." Steve said, eyes focused on the orange light coming from the window where a black silhouette of pop with a book his hand was found.

"Thanks, Steve." She said as a sweet smile moulded itself onto her lips.

"Not gonna thank me some other way?" He said.

"What 'other way' were you thinking of?" She asked.

He raised his hand from his lap and tapped his cheek twice.

A kiss.

That's what he wanted.

She looked behind Steve to where the house sat. The living room lights were on, which created a burnt orange rectangle in the darkness. She saw pop's plump silhouette raise his glass to his mouth, the other hand still holding his book. He could simply walk over to the window, push aside the curtain and see her kissing Steve. But what reason would he have to abandon his book?

Jude looked back to Steve, his soft smile and pale cheeks, and her hormones decided that she didn't care if anyone saw.

The leather creaked under her. She leaned forward into the empty space between them and aimed to press her pink lips to where one of his moles sat just off centre on his cheek. As she got closer, close enough to feel the heat coming off him, he moved. Her lips pressed to his. For a fleeting moment she thought about pulling back but his hands came up to grab the back of her neck and his fingers tangled in her copper curls, imprisoning her.

All fears of her parents seeing them through the living room window melted away as he dragged his tongue across her bottom lip.

She whimpered.

Her mouth opened and allowed entranced for his skilled tongue to meet her amateur one. She swiftly grew confident and placed her hands onto the back of his head so that their positions mirrored. She held onto his hair and fisted it as she pulled him closer. She needed him closer. She wanted to feel more of him.

Their tongues and lips danced together, growing more vicious with every groan and suck and lick. His hands smoothed down to her waist, his fingers tracing circles on her thin white dress. She squirmed. Her lungs started to burn.

Their mouths made a pop sound as they pulled away for air. Her forehead leant against his cheekbone as they tried to catch their breaths. As her head pulled away from his, Jude saw just how dark his eyes were. Normally they were a chocolate brown, honeyed in sunshine, but now they were almost black. Jude couldn't figure out whether they were dark because of the lighting (or lack thereof) in the car or whether his pupils had dilated in lust.

A smirk spread across his lips, mischief in his eyes which she mistook as fondness. The kind of fondness she naïvely thought led to a relationship.

"That was a hell of a thank you." Steve said, voice rough.

She dragged her eyes from his to check the time. Seven minutes had passed. She smiled and thought how their little make out session had been Seven Minutes in Heaven Part II. A girlish and superstitious part of her decided that 7 was now her new lucky number.

She got out of his car and waved at him through the window before he drove off, his car kicking up a bitter gust of wind which hit her and sent a chill scuttling down her spine. She pressed her lips together and felt how swollen they were from kissing.

When she entered the house, she saw each member of the family in their separate places. Neat and tidy. Mom was dusting her 1ft figurine of the Virgin Mary which sat on a side table in the living room, pop had his feet kicked up on the coffee table with his book in hand, and Barb sat at the dining table doing homework.

Mom had paused dusting and had kissed Jude's cheek before wrinkling her nose.

"Have you been smoking?" Mom asked.

"No. There was a group of people outside the theatre smoking when I was waiting for Barb to pick me up." Jude said, before biting the inside of her cheek – a sign of her deceit.

"Oh. Stay away from those people in future, okay honey." Mom said.

"Okay. Um, are you going to say anything to Barb? She didn't come pick me up." She said, voice lowered.

"Of course. Just not now." She said, tapping Jude's shoulder twice before picking up her pink feather duster and carrying on with dusting the photographs on the cupboard.

Jude frowned before stomping over to the dining table.

"Barbara!" Jude smacked Barb's shoulder. Pop gave Jude a stern look from over his chair. "Why weren't you there to pick me up?"

"Oh, shit." Barb's eyes widened a little.

"Language, Barbara." Pop cuts in as he stands from his Lay-Z-Boy.

Jude could tell he wanted to leave now that the silence had dissipated – *or maybe*, Jude thought, *he wanted to leave because I was here now*.

"Sorry, pop." Barb said.

"Saint Barbara." Jude muttered as she rolled her eyes. She crossed her arms and huffed as she sat on the table next to Barb's homework.

"Jude, sit your butt on a seat, not my clean table." Mom said as she made her way from the cupboard and across the room before exiting through the door which led to hallway, her pink feather duster in hand.

Jude didn't budge. Pop looked at her firmly but didn't say anything.

"I'm sorry, Judy." Barb gave a sympathetic look. "Nancy had an emergency."

"An emergency?" She raised her eyebrows in question.

"It's true." Pop cut in again, in a not-so-chipper voice. He moved over to the bookshelf and returned the book he'd been reading. "The phone bill will be proof of that."

Barb scoffed.

Jude narrowed her eyes at Barb, making it crystal clear that Barb *would* elaborate as to why Nancy was more important than her own *darling sister*. Jude was mad, yes, but felt conflicted as to whether Nancy's emergency was good or not. After all, if Barb had picked her up then she wouldn't have gotten to see Steve again. She wouldn't have gotten to press her tongue against his. Or feel his hands on her waist. Or feel his hair between her fingers.

Barb gestured to pop with a nod at his back, communicating with sister-telepathy to wait until he had exited the room before I would speak. Jude glared at pop's back as she watched him leave.

"So, is Saint Barbara going to enlighten me now?" She asked, impatient yet her voice was kept low as to not draw pop back.

"Well," Barb said, as a coy smile spread onto her freckled face. "It's about a boy."

"Seriously?" She tilted her head. "You blew me off for boy trouble? *And* not even your own but someone else's?"

"Look, I was just worried about Nancy." Barb said.

"Fine." Jude raised a hand for Barb to stop talking. "Which boy is it, then?"

"Ugh, that's the worst part." Barb whined. "Nancy's smart and all, but she can be really dense sometimes."

"Who is it?" She asked. "Do I know him?"

"Girl code says I can't tell you." Barb shrugged.

Jude raised an eyebrow. "Okay, you owe me one for not picking me up *and* I think sister code trumps girl code any day. It's like double since we're both girls and sisters, y'know."

It was Barb's turn to raise an eyebrow.

"Spill, Molly Ringwald." Jude said. "I'm *bored* and I need a little drama right now."

"You're so predictable." Barb gave a little laugh. "It figures that's the only reason you'd want to know. It's not like you actually care about Nancy's poor life choices."

"Why would I?" She raised her hands, exasperated. "She's your friend, not mine."

"Are you still mad about that time she wore your dress?" Barb teased.

Her eyes grew wider.

"Ugh, *please* don't bring that up. And no, I'm not still mad." She scoffed as if what Barb had said had been absurd. "And she didn't just *wear* my dress, she ruined it."

Barb's eyes rolled back.

"It was stained!" Her voice rose.

Barb laughed. Neither of them could remember what had made the miniscule tan mark on the white cotton of Jude's lace dress, but Barb did remember how Jude had complained about wearing the dress before, always saying she hated never being allowed to wear anything above the knee. Nancy had borrowed the dress to wear out the day after a sleepover – a last-minute plan so Nancy hadn't brought any of her own clothes – and since Jude seemed to hate the dress, Barb had thought Nancy could totally take it.

"Just tell me who the guy is." Jude pouted and dropped from her place on the table, kneeling down on the floor with her hands in prayer. She gave Barb her version of puppy dog eyes, a look which had stopped working on mom and pop years ago, and because Barb knew of the deficiency of this look when it came to their parents, Barb pitied her and gave in each time.

"Fine." Barb waved her hand. "It's that caveman Harrington."

She stilled then. Her puppy dog look frosted over with ice.

"Harrington." She repeated, dumbly. "As in... Steve?"

"Who else?" Barb asked, voice dripping with disdain.

A poisonous concoction of confusion mixed with bitter betrayal spread through Jude's eyes and made her sweet face seem as cold and dead as winter.

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EDIT: 04/12/18 – I changed it from Barb's POV to no ones. It didn't change much.

Hey! I've been planning and writing little bits of this story since December 2017 so I hoped you enjoyed it.

Please let me know what you think.

Thanks.

Ps. Updates will probably be slow. Sorry! Blame uni, Crimson Wings and Billy motherfucking Hargrove.

2. Cat's in the bag

Hey everyone! Sorry this took so long, Uni started again ugh...

Thannkksss so much to my editor ilypopxtart333!

I changed the name ('Copper Corruption') and I hope you guys prefer the new one.

Anon: It's great to see how invested you are! I'm also excited to explore the dynamics between Jude and her family. And Jude and Nancy have future scenes together and they are mighty spicy. There's gonna be a lot of tea spilled. Thank you for this review! And for your other review of CW, which made my day!

Enjoy!

Jude I

September 1983

"Are you doing anything after school?" Barb asked.

"No." I said. I smoothed the tip of my thumb over the nail of my index finger and relished the feel of how smooth the nail polish was.

"Okay then." Barb said, voice chipper as she adjusted her hands on the wheel. "Meet me by the car when school finishes."

"Great." I said.

Barb stared over at me. I didn't look back at her, afraid that I'd see concern on her freckled face. I bit my lip as I carried on smoothing the skin of my thumb over my nail. I'd filed and painted them last night, just in case I ran into him. I knew that I shouldn't care what he thinks of me or how I looked, especially now that I knew Steve and Nancy were a thing, but a part of me wanted to look good. Refined and sexy. Womanly. I wanted to show him what he was missing. I was naïve enough to think that red nail polish was the key to his

attention. I was lucky mom hadn't spotted the nail polish – if she did, she'd make me remove it. Harlots wore red, [,] the color of Hell and of the devil.

We pulled into the parking lot and Barb expertly parked. There was nothing Saint Barb was bad at – not even parking in reverse. I told myself that I wasn't bitter, I was just very observant.

"Are you okay?" Barb asked as I unbuckled.

I pulled my bag onto my lap. "Yeah, 'course."

"It's just that the other night you were totally acting shifty when I brought up Harrington." She said, unbuckling her seat belt.

I huffed and focused my eyes on the 'Go Tigers' sign by the entrance.

"Do you have a *crush* on him or something?" She asked.

I looked over to her, ice in my eyes. Her eyebrows shot.

"I knew it." She shook her head as she leant forward. "He was at that party you went to, right? The one I covered you for?"

My head nodded, and I avoided meeting her eyes.

"Nothing happened, did it?"

I didn't answer as I leant back into the cushy seat.

"Did it?" She asked, voice becoming stern.

I said nothing.

"Jude?"

"Don't call me '*Jude*'." I said as I opened the door a crack. I felt Barb's hand come down onto my upper arm like a manacle preventing me from leaving the square prison of her car. "Get off."

She removed her hand as if burnt by the venom in my voice and guilt filled me like fuel [,] which caused my next words. "We made out." I said, hoping that my admission would smooth the stormy waters of

Barb's temper.

"What?!" She said.

"Relax, Saint Barbara." I told her as my eyes rolled back into my head. "It was just a game, 'kay?" I stared intently on the grey ceiling of her car as I leant back against the seat and started to play with my nail again.

"No, it's totally not okay." She told me, one hand still resting on the wheel with the other one gesturing wildly as she spoke. "He's like, two years older than you. Mom and dad said we can't date until we're seventeen. You're like two years short of that. And- wait, wait... a game? What does that mean?" She asked, both hands fell to her lap

"Spin the bottle. Seven Minutes in Heaven. A game." I said.

"Oh... ew." She responded. I laughed at her expression. Her forehead crinkled, and her nose and upper lip furled in disgust. The look was made complete by the cute little double chin.

"Ew?" I repeated. I settled my eyes on hers and found the slightest hint of humour that'd bled through her anger and disgust. "Look, big sister, it was nothing serious, so it'd be real great if you don't rat me out to mom and dad."

She raised an incredulous eyebrow at me as if she had said 'fat chance'.

"Fine. Go ahead. I mean, I won't be the only one in trouble if you tell them." I smirked.

"What?" She said, head shaking. "How does that even make sense?"

"It makes sense because *you* covered for me. You lied to them. You, their darling saint of a daughter enabled their other more sinful one to go to a party and get up to all sorts of debauchery. You were the enabler in that equation."

She searched for words like a fish looking for water.

A knock on my window pulled both of us away from the

conversation. I span my neck to find out what had made that noise and smiled once my eyes found Freddie on the other side of the glass and she gestured like a mime for me to get out.

I turned back to Barb and smiled a cheesy grin as my fingers curled around the door handle.

"See ya later, Enabler!" I said, chipper as I got out and left a stunned Barb behind.

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"What an ass." Fred said about Steve as we rounded the corner to my locker.

She kept on talking about how Steve was a creep for stringing along two girls at once, and how he was a player, a man-whore, and she said that his hair wasn't even *that* nice. I tried to listen to her, not wanting to ignore my friend, but I couldn't hear her over the pounding of my chest. I was busy scanning the hallways for his brown hair and chocolate eyes. I didn't know how I felt when I failed to find him; relieved or disappointed.

We made it to my locker, Fred still rambling about 'men this' and 'men that'. I wondered what man had ever actually hurt her emotionally. There was her boyfriend, of course, but he was her first one and they seemed like they stick together for a while. It was Steve who had made me feel like shit, feel used and lied to, betrayed. Of course, I hadn't asked him if he were seeing anyone else – I just assumed he was single. So, it wasn't like Steve had lied to me exactly, he just neglected to tell me everything. I began to wonder about if I had asked about his availability sooner, would he have told me about Nancy or would he have lied? The girlish part of me hoped he would've told the truth, but people like him rarely did.

"Are you listening?" Fred asked, her hand waved in front of my face.

"Yeah," I said. She raised her brows at my response. "Okay, not fully. I was looking for him."

"What? Why?" She questioned. "I thought we agreed on the phone

last night; no more Steve *Douchebag* Harrington."

"Yeah, I know." I held my hands up in surrender. "Which is why I was looking for him. I don't want to run into him."

"Oh." She paused. "Well, I know what I'd do if I saw him."

"What would you do?" I asked.

"I'd slap him." She said with a resolute arch to her eyebrows and a tilting upward of her chin.

"Oh, really?" I asked, incredulous, as I span the dial on my locker.

"Yep." Her voice had lowered like she was in one those old westerns me and Dad used to watch together.

"Like that time you were going to slap Gloria Rode?" I reminded her. Of course, she never slapped Gloria Rode, but she had wanted to and said that she was going to. But she never did. Fred told me herself that she 'pussied out'.

"Fuck off, Jude." She said, back arched into the lockers.

"Don't call me 'Jude'." I said, voice hushed as I pointed a finger at her. I was annoyed that the unwritten rule of my name being 'Judy' and not 'Jude' had been broken twice in the space of ten minutes.

"Okay, *Jude*." She said, in an exaggerated whisper. She knew it would annoy me. She knew me well.

I shook my head and turned the dial to the last digit of the combination. It clicked, Fred began talking again, talking about the people that passed us, telling me if what they were wearing was trashy or too preppy. I shook my head and laughed as she compared Linda Sommer's dress to a shower curtain.

As I swung the locker door open, a piece of paper fell out. My hands fumbled as I tried to catch it, but luckily, I intercepted it before it fell to the ground. I held it up between me and Freddie. It was half a page, ripped on one edge with ink that had seeped through to the other side. I flipped it over and saw red capital letters made with a

thick tipped marker pen. It read: *'MEET ME. GIRLS BATHROOM. -S'*.

Freddie wrenched the note away from my hands.

"That bastard!" She exclaimed while scrunching up the paper into a ball. "He thinks he can- You're not going."

"What?" I asked.

"You're not going." She repeated, shaking her head. "You are not going. No. Teach him a lesson. And it'll give us something to laugh about later."

"I wasn't going to go anyway." I said, fiddling with the edge of my nail.

A sheen of knowing settled in her grey eyes. "Yes, you were." She told me. I shook my head with an open mouth, meaning to interrupt but she beat me to it. "You want to see him. You want to find out why he strung you and Wheeler along. That's why you were searching for him in the hallway. It's only natural. I'd want to do the same, only difference is that once I found him, I'd slap him." She shrugged at the end of her speech.

I opened my mouth once more, intent on telling her that she was wrong, but the bell rang.

"Come on. We'll be late for Chem. Get your books." Fred said.

I grabbed my stuff, shut my locker and tried not to acknowledge the girls' bathroom when we passed it.

...

Fred and I walked from the lunch line with our trays of slop in our hands. The slop was pale and creamy and had bits of green in it. I frowned down at what this school called 'nutritious food'. I caught sight of my red nails and swore to myself that I would remove the color once I got home.

"Oh my god, look." Fred said.

I glanced up and followed her gaze. At the back of the cafeteria was a lone table where a girl with brown hair sat. She picked at her slop, uninterested.

"Isn't that Crazy Clare?" Fred asked. "Harrington's sister."

"Crazy Clare?" I said.

"Yeah, maybe we shouldn't call her that." Fred said.

It was common knowledge among the people of Hawkins that she'd been sent to the loony bin after her friend had committed suicide. I couldn't blame her though – if Freddie or Barb ever left me like that I doubt I'd be completely the same ever again.

"Must be her first day back or something." Fred asked. "Should we sit with her?"

I looked over to where 'Crazy Clare' sat. I'd hate to be as alone as her. But she was Steve's sister and at that moment I didn't want anything to do with him.

"No." I said. The guilt ate at my stomach but I passed it off as just hunger.

...

I rubbed my temples, trying to alleviate the headache that had set in during lunch. I was headed through the sparse hallway to my locker, and then to the parking lot where Barb and her little car waited for me. Once I had gotten there, I transferred books into my locker and shut the door with as quiet a slam I could muster. I didn't need anything to add the pounding in my head.

I began to walk away from the lockers when I stepped onto something. It was a lump under my foot. I looked down at the object and saw that it was the note from earlier. Fred must've tossed it on the floor rather than in a bin where it belonged. I picked it up and unfolded it to confirm my theory. I saw the familiar capitalised lettering. A spike ran through me then, one that felt like regret. *Maybe I should have gone*, I thought.

I shook my head, ashamed with myself for thinking that. Why should I have gone to him? He obviously was just playing games with both Nancy and I. My forehead creased. I crumpled the note into a ball and let it drop from my hand. There was hardly anyone around, so I doubt anyone would see me drop it. It would be gone by tomorrow, picked up and thrown away by a school cleaner in the evening.

I turned around, intent on leaving the note there. A figure stood behind me, blackened from the light hitting his back. I hadn't been alone after all.

"Hey, Judy." Steve said as he walked over to me. He took the balled up note off the ground and had come back up just as slowly, as if he were teasing me by being that close to my legs, my thighs, stomach, breasts. "So, you got my message, then." He said, as he held the note between his fingers. "When did you find it? Just now?"

I shook my head. His eyebrows went up but only slightly.

"You found it this morning or..." He trailed off, the note still between his index and middle finger as he brought his hand down to rest at his side.

I let silence answer.

"You stood me up then?" Steve's normally warm brown eyes had a sharp edge to them which threatened to slice into me.

"Did I?" I asked, trying to sound nonchalant as I tilted my head to the side.

"Uh, yeah. Why is that, exactly?" The corner of his mouth lifted, though I knew he wasn't happy.

I shrugged. His half-smile faded.

"Look, I was gonna invite you to a party." He said.

"What about Nancy?" I asked, though I already knew there was something going on between them.

Steve grimaces, face creased as if he were a mixture of disgusted and

confused.

"What about her?" He asked, which made me think he was trying to play innocent.

"Is she going to the party too?" I asked.

"Why would she come?" He raised his hands in question.

I rolled my eyes and tried to walk around him, but he manoeuvred himself so that he blocked my path. I cursed inwardly at the skill that he no doubt gained during years of basketball practice.

"Okay, okay." He says, holding his hands up in surrender. "We made out like one time- but- but it's, you know, it's nothing special. We just fooled around. It was nothing serious."

'*Nothing serious*'? What did that mean? Could Steve and I become 'serious'? Did he want that for us? Did he want me?

"So," I drag the word out, buying time for my brain to catch up with reality. "You're not... dating or anything?"

"No." Steve said with a small shake of his head. "God, no." He sounded relieved, but was he relieved that I had believed him or relieved about not dating Nancy? At the time I was sure it had been the latter.

"Okay." I nodded slowly.

A triumphant smile started to spread inch by inch onto his face.

"Okay', what?" He questioned as a hint of a smile tugged at his lips.

"Okay, I'll come to your stupid party." I said.

I watched the full-blown smile form on his face. He had a nice smile, all white and straight teeth and eyes which lit up and removed the edge they'd held a few moments ago. I couldn't stop the corners of my own mouth turning up to mirror his.

"Need a ride home?" He asked, anticipating a 'yes'.

"Um, thanks for the offer but..." I began. "Barb's waiting for me."

"Who?" Steve looked genuinely confused at who she was. I had to swallow down the sharp tug in my gut. I couldn't describe it; the feeling of when someone even remotely threatens to treat you family like crap. I knew how much of a hypocrite I was. Just this morning I had been a total bitch to Barb, but I was family. Steve – or anyone else for that matter – was not. Also, how could he be that dense? He and Barb were in the same year in school, and she was friends with Nancy, the girl he had 'made out a couple times' with – which made my stomach feel as though it were turning inside out. And I had told him about her the night of the party.

"My sister." I supplied, though I got the feeling that he didn't care.

"Oh," He took a step back, and held my gaze. "Another time then?"

I nodded. He walked away from me, his steps not quite loud enough to echo in the empty hallway. I thought of the other night when Barb had left me stranded outside the theatre. She had been talking with Nancy, the same girl that Steve had been interested in. The green monster snuck up on me then, twisted my insides and called for revenge. Revenge against who though? Barb for choosing Nancy over me – it felt as though Steve had done the same, though we weren't even dating – or Nancy for attracting Steve and stealing my sister's time away from me?

I supposed that it didn't really matter, I just knew that accepting Steve's offer would piss someone off.

"Steve!" I called out to him.

He stopped, then turned to face me. A soft smile spread onto his face.

"On second thought..." I asked. "Can I still get a ride from you?"

"Sure." He nodded, and I failed to notice his sweet smile turn killer in an instant. He'd gotten his way.

...

He'd driven me halfway back to mine before taking a turn down the

intersection of Cornwallis and Kerley, taking us the wrong way. When I had told him of this, he'd simply shrugged and said he knew. I'd asked him 'what are you doing?' to which he replied, 'I'm kidnapping you', smirking all the while.

He'd driven us to the ravine, a popular place to *park*. I bit my lip as I looked over to him. He licked his lips and lent over the gears. I knew he wanted to kiss me. But I wanted revenge for not telling me about Nancy. I opened the door and slid from the seat, playful smirk fixed onto my face.

"Hey!" He said, resting his hands onto my seat. "Where ya going?"

I raised an eyebrow at him. "I'm getting some air. Wanna join me?"

He awkwardly climbed out of my side of the car, stumbling as he got to his feet then rested one hand casually against the top of the car, pretending as though I hadn't just seen him struggle to get out. I scoffed as I turned from him. I was greeted with the view of a lilac and yellow sky with birds' black silhouettes against the sunset.

"Think of this view during the summer." I said, chest filling with contentment.

He walked up to me and put his hand on my lower back.

"Think of the view *now*." He gestured with his free hand to the wide sky that stretched in front of us.

I pulled him along as I moved to the edge of the ravine, looking at the water below. My breath caught at the height, but I couldn't deny the beauty of it as the rippling surface reflected the lilac and golden sky that lay overhead, and gently rolled with the autumn breeze.

I leant over some more, not realizing how far over I had gotten until a rock slid out of place. The grating of the rock seemed to happen in a reality where the senses were slowed so I became hyperaware of everything. The taste of my strawberry lip balm as I bit my lip. The sound of the rustling branches. The feel of the rock sliding out from under me. The feel of falling. The feel of pure dread as gravity began to pull at my foot.

Then came the feel of Steve's hands clasp at my waist as they pulled me away from the edge.

"Fuck." He cursed. "Careful, Jude."

I looked at him with wide eyes as I grasped onto his shoulders as he pulled us away from the edge. He was firm under my hands, like when we'd kissed in the closet and then in his car.

"You walked to the edge." He said. "Are you crazy?"

"You called me Jude." I said.

He raised his eyebrows at me. I was too distracted by not being annoyed by him calling me 'Jude' to respond. He was the third person to do that today, but for some unexplainable reason, I felt like letting him get away with his transgression.

"Yeah." He shrugged. "That's your actual name, right?"

I gave a nod.

He licked his lips before turning his head back to where I had nearly fallen. I was transfixed by his wet lips. I felt my own mouth dry up, longing to be moistened by his kiss. He turned back to me as his hands rose from my waist to my neck. He smoothed his thumbs over the skin just under my jawline and I wondered if he could feel my pulse quicken.

"Are you good?" He looked at me, intense brown eyes swimming with worry as they searched my own.

"You totally just saved my life." I non-answered.

"Totally." He nodded. "Gonna thank me?"

A coy and playful smile tugged at his peach colored lips and my tongue darted out to wet my own. I looked between his pale cheek and his warm lips, deciding which part of his face I should thank. I went onto my tiptoes as my face leaned in, decision made. I held his chin so that he couldn't move it this time. I pressed my lips to the edge of his jawline. I felt the beginnings of stubble under the soft skin

of my lips.

"That's all the thanks you're going to get from me this evening." I smiled up at him, coy as I rubbed my lips together and danced away from him to his car. I leant against the hood before pulling myself up onto it.

"Oh really?" He asked, shaking his head as his arms crossed. "Wanna bet?"

"Nope." I said as I walked over the car and sat on the hood.

"Why?" He followed me. "Afraid you'll lose?"

"Yeah." I nodded. I didn't trust myself around him. "But then we'd probably end up being here a while and I have to be back before my mom starts to worry. I don't want her to send a search party out for me."

"She'd really do that?" Steve asked, eyes wide as he sat next to me.

"Uh, not really. I was exaggerating." I said as I placed my hands behind me and leant on them, the tone of my voice making him realize what a dumb question that was. She wouldn't send a search party out for me, obviously. They would for Barb, their precious girl.

I realized if it hadn't been Steve who pulled up to me last night and if it had been a stranger or a kidnapper or a murderer... maybe there would be a search party out for me right now. Would there be police and volunteers combing the woods for me? Fred would be upset and despite all that I had said about my parents, I knew they would be wrought with loss. But Barb, my saintly sister, would feel the worst. I couldn't stop the images of her crying into her pillow in the room we shared. What a horrid thought that was.

"So, um..." Steve began with an almost sheepish expression. "When do you think you'll be free to see me next? Outside of school, I mean."

"I don't know." I said. "My parents are strict during semesters. I have to study and do chores and shit like that."

"Well, that's great!" Steve said, coming to stand before me.

"How is that great?" My eyebrows drew together.

"You said you have to study right?" He rose his eyebrows. "So, it's great because we can study together. Y'know, I'm a good study partner."

"Somehow I doubt that." I raised a skeptical eyebrow.

"C'mon. I love to *study*." Steve said as his mouth coyly tilted upward.

"There's not a chance in hell." I shook my head. "My parents won't let me if they know it's with a boy. Especially a boy who's two years older than me."

"Then lie." He shrugged coming to stand in front me. "Tell them you're meeting up with a girlfriend in the library. Then come to mine and we'll..." He placed a hand on my thigh. "... *study*."

"You say 'study' like we won't actually be studying." I pointed out, although I was aware of what he wanted to be doing instead. I moved my thighs open just a little.

"I promise we'll study." His hand travelled to the sensitive skin of my upper thigh. His thumb smoothed over the skin there. I felt a heat stir in my lower belly.

"Study what?" I asked as his hand slipped further up. His fingers rubbed patterns into the skin the found. I didn't know if wearing a skirt that day was a mistake or the best decision I'd ever made.

"Each other." He said.

My thighs clamped down on his hand as I chortled.

"Each other?" I giggled. "Study 'each other'? That's a ridiculously corny thing to say."

He removed his hand and placed them on the car either side of my hips as he scowled at me though a playfulness danced in his eyes.

"Corny or not, are you up for it?" I couldn't decide whether his expression was angry or not. If he was angry, was it because I'd

laughed at him or because I'd stopped his hand from going further?

"I might be." I said before biting my lip.

"Ugh, Christ." He stepped back from me, head shaking. "You're such a tease."

...

I swallowed down the guilt when Barbara whined that I'd left her sat in her car in the parking lot for half an hour. The guilt had somehow lessened when I told her who'd given me a lift home, and it was replaced by a feeling of superiority. This was 'karma for leaving me to freeze on Friday night', something I had told her with a Tommy H-esque smirk laced onto my lips.

"I seriously can't believe you left me for *Steve*." She shook her head from where she at her desk, book in hand.

"I can't believe you left me for Nancy." I shot back, eyebrow raising.

"You're still mad about that?" She asked.

"No!" I crossed my arms.

"Then why bring it up?!" Her voice raised.

"Because I did!" I shouted, aware of how crappy my argument was. Mom and dad were in the living room and both hopefully couldn't hear us shouting at each other in mine and Barb's shared bedroom.

"Why are you so immature?!" She threw her hands up in the air. "You used to be cool back when you were in middle school! Now you're just- ugh!"

"I'm just what?" I stood from my bed. "Go on."

"Not yourself." She shrugged. "You're so different. So- so mean."

I observed the color in her cheeks and the wetness in her eyes. She couldn't be right. What I had done by leaving her wasn't any worse than what she had done to me last night.

"I'm not mean." I told her as I scowled.

"Are you sure about that?" She asked, cold eyes that were so much like

"Just piss off, Barb." I crossed my arms.

"I was here first. I was born first." She told me, looking back at her book. "Why don't you 'piss off?'"

I rolled my eyes before I settled on exiting the room.

I wasn't 'mean', not any meaner than I had been in middle school at least. I was still the same person I always was. Barb was wrong. Yet, a small part of my stomach reminded me that Barb was the sister who was always right, but I chose to ignore it.

...

Hope you guys enjoyed!

If you've read Crimson Wings, did you like the way I brought in Crazy Clare?

IMPORTANT: do you think Steve is being portrayed okay? I really wanna get this story right, so any constructive criticism about anything really, not just Steve, would be much appreciated.

Thank you so much for reading

3. and the bag is in Steve's pool

Thank you to all those who reviewed/followed/favourited/gave constructive criticism! You're all so great! And I'm really sorry I took so long to update. I would say 'New year, new me' but I know I'll never change how bad I am at updating on time lol.

ALSO, I don't want to spoil aspects of this chapter, *but* it may seem as though I'm kind of copying the plot with Steve and Nancy but there's a reason for it...

Hope you enjoy!

Jude II

"I thought *you* said you were going to help me with my homework." I said from the foot of his bed. Steve smiled and leant up from his pillows, smirking with sharp teeth.

I had just answered one of his chem questions, it being the subject he sucked the most at which was surprising really – chem for me had always been as easy as breathing. The other non-science related subjects, however, were not so easy. So, I guess I could understand that he was bad at something, but I didn't understand how that something could be chem. Although, I supposed that after he told me how his dad had reacted to his report card last year, he must've sucked at more than that. More than *most* actually which was why I decided on helping him.

I had lied to my parents and Barb – a feat which I came closer to mastering each time I did it. Despite Steve's heated words in the quarry, we had yet to 'study each other' and had instead looked over his homework.

"Yeah, well, I guess it turned out I needed more help than you." Steve said as he threw his pencil onto his test paper.

"You just need more practice." I said.

"Yeah, that'll help." He said after scoffing.

"Hey, it will." I said as I inched closer to him. "It will. Practise makes perfect."

"How do you even know this stuff?" He fixed his eyes on me. "You're, like, two years younger than me."

"My dad's a bit of a nerd." I said, head nodding away from him. "He used to teach me stuff."

Steve's head tilted as his lips pursed. "You're like, *smart*, right?"

"Well, not really." I shrugged as my teeth caught my bottom lip.

"Okay, cut the crap, Jude." He said. "You're smart."

"Your point?" I nodded for him to carry on, ignoring his use of my actual name.

"If you're so smart then why are we studying right now?" He said, slyly as his body inched its way to mine. "We could be doing other... more stimulating... things."

"Oh?" I said as my teeth let my lip go free a slight pop.

"Yeah." Steve climbed over to me, coming closer until his face and body loomed over mine.

"More '*stimulating*'?" I let out a small huff of a laugh. "Like what?"

"Like this." He smiled as he pressed his lips to mine.

His tongue parted my lips. Tingles spread down my spine. The thin hair on my arms rose as his tongue brushed along mine with soft strokes.

He changed our position and lay me down, our teeth clashing as we settled. Sweet shivers tickled my spine again as his mouth trailed to my jawline. I pressed myself into him as I grasped his hair.

Neither of us paid attention to the rumple of his test paper under us or the door as it opened.

"Oh!" A female voice said.

We sat up. Gasps escaped our wet lips.

My eyes took in the intruder. A woman, blonde, with icy eyes so wide and marble-like that at any moment her two marbles could roll out from her sockets and tumble onto the floor.

"Mom!" Steve said, as he scrambled to sit on the edge of the bed.
"Hey."

"Who's this?" She asked, marble eyes still firmly in place.

"Uh, this is Jude-"

"I'm Judy." I interrupted. "Hi." I said as I waved, awkward.

"I'm Mrs Harrington." She smiled tightly, her flawless skin barely creased.

"We were studying." Steve tried to explain but his mom held out a hand for him to stop.

"I know what you were doing." She said, her eyes wide as they fixed onto the floor. "Are you planning on staying for dinner, Jude-y?"

"Uh, no. Sorry." I replied. "My mom's expecting me."

"Okay. *Steve*, I came here to tell you that dinner is almost ready. Your friend should think about leaving before that time." She said with a pretty smile on her face. "Keep your door open, honey."

"Kay, Mom." Steve nodded.

She opened the door as wide as it would go and made sure it wouldn't move before she glanced back at us, gave another tight smile and left.

"I can't believe they let you have a girl in your room." I whispered.
"And your mom was almost fine with us making out."

"They don't care about me. They're fine with it." He shook his head as

he repositioned himself on the bed, lying back against the headrest. "As long as I don't knock you up."

I flinched at his nonchalance.

"Crap." He moved away from me to his crumpled homework and tried to flatten the paper out.

I resisted the urge to itch my neck which grew hotter each time his hands pressed to the paper. His hands had pressed at my waist like that. I wanted them to press onto me again, and in other places... but that had to wait. It had to. I couldn't be like those other girls. Like Becky, and Lori and... has he done it with Nancy too?

"Why do ya look so grumpy?" He said as he raised a hand to my chin. He held the tip of it between his fingers as he sat next to me again, his face near mine. His bottom lips stuck out to imitate the way I must've looked.

I sucked in my bottom lip and chewed on it as I drew back from him, removing my face from his grip.

"Hey... what's wrong?" He said, voice soft. In my peripheral I could see his head tilt as he leaned closer. "Have I done something?"

"You might have." My brow furrowed, and I sucked in a deep breath – a breath which was supposed to calm me, but it failed. I crossed my arms.

"What do you mean?" He asked.

"You and Nancy." I turned to face him.

"Not this again." His eyes rolled.

"Did you and her do more than just..."

"Just what? Kiss?" He asked, eyebrows raised as his head tilted. "Of course not."

"It's just- I feel like I need to know because I don't want to be like Amy... or Becky and Lori. Or like Nancy. I don't want to just be a-

a... fuck. But I don't want to be some girl you kiss and move on from either."

"Listen, you're not a slut." He said, callous. "And you're not just some girl either. You're different. I mean, you're great at chem for Christ's sake."

A small laugh bubbled up from my chest.

"And I..." Steve continued as he took hold of my hand. "I have fun with you. I really like you and I'd be honoured to do more than just..." He leaned in and brushed his lips against my ear before whispering, "...kiss your mouth."

"Where else would you kiss me?" I whispered as I tried and failed to ignore the heat pooling in my stomach.

His hand trailed along my neck, tracing the skin. "Here," he said. His hand went further down until it was over the thin fabric between my breasts. "Here," he whispered. "And..." His hand moved again and slid between my legs. "Here."

"Steve!" I said as I grabbed at his wrist and pulled it from *that* place. "The door's open."

"If the door was closed then would you let me kiss you there?" He sniggered.

My mouth was open; lips trembling; cheeks on fire – but they weren't as fiery as the heat between my legs.

I didn't answer him, and a grin grew on his face meaning he took my silence as a yes, but truthfully I wasn't sure.

"Y'know, if the problem is that my parents are here, they'll be gone by tomorrow." He said, voice pleased. There was no tension in his voice – there hadn't been earlier when he lightly joked about knocking me up. Though, I supposed he had no reason to stress: we hadn't even had sex yet. *Yet*.

"In time for the party you want me to come to, right?" I asked.

"You're coming to the party." He smirked, resting his face between the junction of my neck and shoulder with his hands tight on my waist.

"Oh, am I?" I asked into his thick hair.

"I'm not taking 'no' for an answer." He said as his nose traced up my neck. My answer (whether it be no or yes or maybe or never or always) was lost to me as soon as his lips found mine.

...

"I can't believe you're going to another party." Barb said from behind and I watched as her arms crossed in the mirror's reflection from my seat at the vanity. She still hadn't forgiven me for not telling her I was getting a ride home from Steve the other day.

This was typical Barb behaviour.

"There's only going to be like 4 people there, including me." I shrugged as I filed my nails. "So, it's not an actual party, duh."

"And on a school night." She shook her head as she ignored my statement. "You better be back before 12 or-"

"Or what? You'll tell mommy and daddy about me going out on, *gasp*, a school night?" I said, voice mocking her horror as I dropped my nail file onto the vanity.

She simply tilted her head to the side.

"Look, I'm not going to do anything stupid." I said as I began to backcomb my hair.

"This time." She said, snide, as her head tilted further and was joined by an arched eyebrow.

I stilled my movement as I caught her eyes in the mirror. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Well, last time you did some pretty stupid things." She said, arms unfolding and flapping in the air like an undead thanksgiving turkey.

"Like get drunk. Like coming home smelling of weed. And Freddie told me you actually *spoke* to Carol. Carol, of *all* people."

I sprayed hairspray and laughed at Barb's crumpled face when she breathed it in. She fanned away the fumes as she sent a glare my way. I rolled my eyes.

"Carol actually wasn't that bad." I said as I focused on perfecting my hair. "Not as bad as you make her out to be."

"I can't believe you just said that- no, wait, I can." She said as she plopped down on the bottom bunk of our bunkbed. "And, of course, there's the other stupid thing you did: you made out with Steve Harrington." She pointed at me.

"Just cool it, Barb." I said as I span to face her. "Just because you're jealous that I'm having a great time-"

"Jealous?" She laughed. "I'm jealous of you? Why do you think you're even acting out in the first place?"

"Go on. Tell me." I stood up and looked at her reflection. "Enlighten me."

"You are the one who's jealous." She said.

I shook my head and scoffed.

"You want mom and pop to pay attention to you. You think they only care about me, so you're acting out. But the truth is-"

"Get the fuck out!" I span around to face her as I pointed to the door.

"I'm your sister-"

"Not a very good one." I interrupted as I crossed my arms.

"Harrington just wants to get into your pants. It's obvious. You're either an idiot who doesn't see it, or an idiot who doesn't have any self-respect."

"Get out." I said. I blinked away wetness so it wouldn't drip past my

waterline and ruin my make-up. Steve was picking me up soon, I didn't have time to reapply anything because Barb decided to open her stupid mouth.

"Just remember what I said." She frowned. "Don't do anything you'll regret. Promise?"

"I have to get dressed." I muttered. "Leave."

Barb's big eyes dropped from me as she headed to the door. Her hand fell on the doorknob. She turned it, opening it before stepping through. As it was closing, I spoke;

"Barb!"

"What?" She asked.

"I promise."

...

My wet clothes clung to me and I shivered with every step I took up the cream staircase.

I cursed Tommy. Earlier, he had laughed as he pushed Carol and Steve into the Harrington's pool. This had prompted me to try to help Steve out and he repaid my kind gesture by pulling me into the water with him, grinning slyly as he did so. The silver lining had been that the pool was heated, so at least I was warm – which was more than I could say for myself right now as I followed Steve to his room where dry clothes awaited me.

"Is your sister home?" I asked as we walked passed a door with a wooden butterfly hanger on it.

"No." He said, simply. He led me from her door, further along the dim hallway of his suddenly caliginous house.

"How is she anyway?" I said as we turned a corner and carried on, each step taking us into a darker part of the house.

Steve stayed silent and I wondered if I'd stepped over a line by asking

about his sister. It was common knowledge that she'd been sent to a mental hospital after her friend had committed suicide. I couldn't blame her though – if one of my friends ever left me like that I doubt I'd be completely the same ever again.

"Uh, she's..." He said, voice strained as if he was uncomfortable – maybe even embarrassed – talking about his sister. "...fine, I guess."

"Oh, well I hope she gets better." I said as we stopped. The darkness in this hallway was oppressive and seemed to strangle any natural conversation from us. I watched him place a hand on a door knob and turned it slowly, as if nervous.

"Yeah... me too." He said quietly as his door opened.

We stepped inside. The room was smaller than I thought King Steve's would be. The only light here were the strips of blue which streamed in through his blinds from the pool outside. My eyes found the homework we'd done together yesterday on the desk next to his bowling pin. I never would've begged him as a fan a bowling.

The poster of the supermodel was in the shadows but her white bikini was still visible. I blushed as I thought of my white underwear – I promised myself I had worn them today because they were the only set that was dry (and lacked cartoon bows and hearts) and not because Miss Supermodel had inspired me.

He rifled through his draws and after a few seconds handed me clothes – a long sleeved red sweater with grey sweatpants which I thought would only just fit my thicker than average thighs and behind, making the sweatpants look more like leggings – before he went to change in his bathroom.

Despite the cold, I didn't want to change right away. Whilst I idly stood next to his bed, I recalled memories of yesterday. His lips had been thick and wet against mine. They had massaged my mouth and my tongue with maddening grace I hadn't thought Steve was capable of.

He'd said I wasn't like the other girls. I wasn't going to be just a fuck. Or a quick kiss.

My lips tingled. I rose a hand to touch them. My eyes found the door to his bathroom and I smiled to myself as an idea formed. *His mom wasn't here to interrupt us this time.*

I began to peel the wet clothes from my aching flesh until I was left in my white panties and bra. I shivered as I climbed onto his cold sheets, the fabric bunched and creased where I crawled, before I lay myself in the middle. I tried to arrange myself on the pillow. Should I push my hair back from my neck so that it lay like a halo around my head? Should I lay my hands over my waist like Snow White on her deathbed? Or should I place them above my head? How should I position my legs? The models I'd seen had their legs together or one on top of the other. Which would Steve like best? What would he find the sexiest?

I decided to keep my hair as it was, hands above my head and draped one freshly shaven leg over the other. I felt a nervous giggle bubble in chest as I finalised the look, but I held it in not wanting Steve to hear.

I wasn't sure how to proceed. Should I call him in or wait for him to find me like this?

I can wait, I thought as I placed a piece of copper hair onto my chest before moving back into position.

I tried to make my eyes appear doe like by widening them before narrowing the inner corners. I pursed my lips in waiting. My chest heaved with nervous energy, but I couldn't help but feel like Marilyn Monroe, a Hollywood starlet capable of making a man like Steve's heart pump and pulse and quicken in his chest.

But then reality sunk in. I wasn't some model nor was I ever going to be as stunning as Monroe. I sat up and put my head on my knees as I thought about quickly putting on the clothes Steve had given me but then the door handle jiggled.

The door opened an inch. Steve poked his head out with a hand covering his eyes.

"You done?" He asked.

I didn't answer. I sat there, heart replaced by the beat of a hummingbird's wings. I hurriedly scrambled to my position.

"You okay, Judy?" He said.

I nodded my head before I realised that with the hand still covering his eyes, he couldn't see.

I took a deep breath and steadied myself.

Earlier, when the boys had been busy trying to squash empty beer cans against their thick skulls, Carol had taken me inside, linking her arm with mine as we went. She had plenty of things that boys liked. And she said the first-time having sex was something you had to get over and done with. I had to go through with it. And then Steve and I would probably start dating. And then maybe someday we'd get married. And we'd have two girls and one boy with brown eyes and copper hair.

"Steve." I said, though my voice sounded like a question.

"Yeah?"

"You can look." I said, voice steady despite the thrum in my chest.

He uncovered his eyes. They found mine before trailing down my body.

I trembled under his eyes. My palms itched. He stepped forward.

We caught eyes and I looked away. I focused my gaze on the ceiling. In my peripheral, I saw him move over to the bed and it shifted as he sat on the edge and turned his upper body to face me.

"Jude." He said.

My eyes met his.

"Yeah?" I said. He leaned closer

"You want to..." He breathed the words and as they hit me, shivers rolled up my spine. I study his face in the darkness. His eyes were

black and filled with want.

"Yeah." I whispered.

His right arm reached around my body and settled on the bed next to hip. He adjusted himself on the bed so that his upper body hovered above mine. He licked his lips. He lowered his head. My eyes drifted shut. Our lips met.

Light filled his bedroom through my closed eyelids and my eyes shot open. Our mouths parted with a slick pop. I turned my head and found Tommy knelt in the doorway with Carol leant on his shoulder, both laughing at Steve and I.

Steve I

"Guys!" I shouted. "Come on. Really, what the fuck is wrong with-" Before I could finish, Jude had rushed to doorway, slinking past them. I heard the light patter of her small feet against my stairs. Tommy and Carol carried on laughing.

"You're both fucking morons, you know." I said.

...

I kicked Tommy and Carol out, telling them to fuck off as I did so. They'd forgive me tomorrow. And Tommy would be extra forgiving once I told him about getting into Judy's pants.

I looked around the house for Judy. She wasn't in any of the bedrooms – although I didn't check my sister's room – nor was she in the kitchen or any of the bathrooms. I walked into the dark living room and through the blinds I could see a black silhouette against the luminous blue pool and the steam which rose from its depths. She sat before the pool, knees drawn to her chest.

I opened the sliding door and stepped out. I cringed when my bare feet hit the cold ground before I walked over to her, stopping once I was directly behind her. I looked at her lightly shaking form and knelt down. She shivered. I placed my hands on her back. She flinched.

"It's alright." I said as I dragged my hands up and down her back, her shoulders and arms, trying to warm her. "Wanna go back inside?"

She shook her head.

"I got rid of Tommy and Carol." I said.

She didn't move nor did she say anything. Her ghost-silence was unnerving.

I leant my head on her shoulder and whispered into her ear, "Come back inside."

"I wanna stay here." She said. "It's pretty."

I looked at the swirls of the steam as it lifted from the surface of the blue pool, the blue tiles from beneath the water resembled the color of her eyes. Behind the pool, the trees rustled as another gust of wind carried over cold air. Hair rose along my bare skin. She shivered. I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her tight against my naked chest.

"It is pretty..." I agreed, "but it's also freezing."

She didn't reply and instead leant her head back against my shoulder, gazing at the stars as she exposed her long pale neck. I licked my lips. I pressed my lips on to her shoulder, then her clavicle. I pressed kisses further up. She turned her head and caught my lips.

Her mouth no longer tasted like mint. She tasted like honey. Rich and thick and golden. The taste of her gathered in my mouth and slid down my throat, warming my oesophagus, my lungs, my heart.

She gave a breathy moans as we parted mouths. I trailed my lips along her neck as she turned her body to face mine. I pushed her so that she lay down. My hips went between her legs. Her panties rubbed against my boxers.

There was one sobering thought. I'd left the condom upstairs; I'd have to remember to pull out.

My hand pushed her panties to the side. I rubbed my hand along her

entrance. She was already slick. She gasped. She needed *me*.

"Stop." She said.

"What?" I said, fingers paused on her wet heat as my mouth parted from her skin.

I leant back on my knees and found her chest heaving, each gasping breath made her breasts rise and fall. Upon further admiring, I found her hand grasped onto the pool ladder as if at any moment the earth's axis would turn in a new direction, leaving us to slide though the air. Her eyes were just as desperate, just as full of fear as the muscles in her thin arm. Did I do that to her? I thought I had been doing the complete opposite, but now from my position above she looked like a frightened lamb about to be eaten by a wolf.

Her breathy moans, her gasps... they all at once seemed like a warning of her discomfort rather than the signs of pleasure I thought they were.

"Are you okay?" I asked as I backed away from her and sat cross legged.

Her legs, which had seemed to part and wrap around my hips so deliciously clamped together before her arms came up to wrap around her knees.

"I thought you... I didn't mean to go too far or anything..." I said all at once overwhelmed with the uncomfortable weight of guilt.

"No, it's fine. I thought I wanted it. I thought I was ready. But..." She shrugged, and her eyes never strayed from the ground.

"It's okay. So, you really are a virgin?" I said, and I immediately cursed at myself. I always spoke without thinking.

"What do you think?" She snarled.

I drew my lip into my mouth and chewed into the squishy flesh.

"Look, I'm uh... sorry." I said as my eyes desperately tried to catch onto hers, but to no avail. The ground was more interesting than me,

I guess.

"About what?" She frowned.

"Uh, about pushing you. And for what I said."

"Don't be. You didn't push me into doing anything. I wanted to do it and I made you think that you were going to get another notch on your belt but then I... chickened out." Her head shook.

"It's okay to chicken out. Lots of girls do." I said, aiming at being calming.

She glared up at me. The relief I should've felt as her eyes met mine was dampened because of her anger. I had wanted her eyes, bright and warm, to touch mine but bitterness met me instead.

"You'd know, wouldn't you?" She said, voice sour as her head shook. "It's obvious that you're way more experienced than me and you just see me as some 'virgin', some unexperienced little girl who's not even grown fully into her tits yet."

"What?" I said as frustration brewed in my stomach.

"It's true." She nodded as she stood.

"I don't see you like that. If I did then I wouldn't have invited you here." I said with a creased brow.

"Who else would you have invited then?" She crossed her arms. "Nancy?"

"I don't know. Maybe." I shrugged.

She trod past me and I grabbed onto her wrist as I stood. She wrenched her wrist back as if my touch had been cold as ice. She carried on walking, only feet away from the door.

"I don't see you as some little girl!" I said, shrugging as I called after her. She turned to me and her face, normally as easy to read as a 1st grade text, was unreadable. "And I think your tits are fine."

"Fine?" Her eyebrows raised. "They're 'fine', are they?"

"I don't know what you want me to say." I said as both hands raised in question.

The only sound to escape us for a few seconds was our harsh breaths, and I swear I could hear her heart beating – although it was probably mine.

"I think we should just call this a night. I'll leave." She said, raking a hand through her copper locks.

"Don't-" I stared but a glare from her cut me off. "You've got a ride home right?"

She didn't reply.

"At least let me drive you home, okay?" I asked.

"Sure." She shrugged. "I'll go get dressed."

...

"How'd it go?" Tommy asked the next day as we stood in the showers after gym class. Most of the guys were changing into their clothes already, which left me and Tommy alone under the spray.

"How'd what go?" I asked as I smoothed shampoo into my scalp.

"Don't play dumb." He said, voice scratchy. "You fucked her, and now I wanna know how it was."

I didn't answer, and instead carried on lathering.

"C'mon, Steve." He laughed. He always sounded like a hyena when he did that. "What was she like?"

"Uh, she was..." I began before I had formed an answer.

"Was what, huh?" He teased. "Cat got your tongue? No, wait, pussy got your tongue?" He chuckled at his own joke. "Wait, you didn't go down on her, did you?" He scowled though there was lust with just a

hint of curiosity in his eyes.

"I didn't." I said, thinking of my promise to Jude the other day. I wanted to know what she looked like down there; whether she was bare or had short curls matching her copper locks. I also wondered if her wet heat would taste as sweet as her mouth did.

"That's not a bad thing though, right?" I asked. "Going down on someone?"

"Uh... no. I mean, depends on what the chick looks like. Or tastes like." Tommy said, oblivious to my musings on the taste of Jude – or perhaps he was thinking about the very same thing. My chest constricted as green jealousy found its way into my bloodstream. Jude would never get with Tommy. I tried to ignore the fact that she'd probably never get with me either, not after our fight last night.

"Sure, Tommy." I said as I rinsed my hair.

"You didn't answer." He pressured me. "What was she like?"

I stared at the orange tile and tried to think of what to say.

When he'd asked me about Lori, I said she was great and knew how to move her hips. With Amy, I said she was amazing at head but not so much at anything else. And Becky was pretty much forgettable apart from her porn star tits.

None of them had ever told me to stop. None of them had ever argued with me. None of them had been virgins either, maybe that was why Jude had been *different*. Was this how Lori had felt about me? She had, after all, been the one to take my virginity.

"You okay, man?" He asked. "She rattled you, huh?" A teasing smirk spread across his stupid face.

"Look, it was nothing." I said. "She's no one special. Just a fuck."

"Sure, man." He said as he raised a defensive hand. "But what was she like?"

God, he was like a dog with a juicy fucking bone.

I decided to answer Tommy, if only to get him to shut up.

But how would I answer him? Every time Jude's mouth had met mine was... there was just something I couldn't place. She was *ethereal*. Trying to explain it was like trying to catch a ghost between your fingers. It would just slip away, leaving your palms empty and cold. I couldn't describe how her skin against mine had made my insides melt. I couldn't describe the way her eyes made my chest turn to honey.

I couldn't explain the dead weight which had settled in my chest as we fought. I couldn't decipher what she had wanted me to say or do or why she told me to stop. I couldn't explain why this was such a big deal to me.

And if I couldn't explain it to myself – and I wasn't sure if I even wanted to – how would I even begin to explain it to Braindead Tommy?

But should I tell him the truth about the rejection? No. I didn't want to deal with his hyena's laugh right now, which was sure to come if I told him Jude hadn't wanted me in the end.

"She was great. Really tight." I said, succeeding in sounding bored.

Tommy slapped me on the shoulder and sent drops of water flying from my skin before he said something lewd. I ignored him and focused instead on trying not to think about Jude anymore, but it was already too late, the fever was spreading. She had infected me.

...

I walked into English late. I smoothly apologised to Mr Buell before I took my seat behind Nancy Wheeler. Before I sat, I smiled at Nancy, who returned it with pink lips. Nancy's lips were soft like Jude's.

I had kissed Nancy in my car last week and hadn't realised that what I felt with Jude was missing. Now I feared that every kiss after Jude wouldn't be the same again – I'd be stuck in a constant circle of making out with people and not feeling what I felt with Jude... but was that such a bad thing? The feeling was scary. I could already feel

the urge for it but I didn't want to feel like that; like I was dependant on someone to feel good. I had depended on my family once, but they always seemed to leave. I can only depend on myself.

I supposed that kissing Nancy was different; like a catching butterflies and setting them free. I didn't need to depend on it. It was sweet, she was sweet. Someone I could mess around with. And like Jude, she wasn't a slut. Nancy probably wanted a relationship. And being with Nancy wasn't scary like it was with Jude. I could see myself as Nancy's boyfriend. With Jude, there was only lust. I couldn't see a future between us – the skies in that universe were way too foggy to glean anything; whether there was a storm heading in or whether the sun would peak through the clouds and give life to soft flowers and winding trees, I couldn't tell.

But Nancy was normal, a relationship with her would be as firm as the concrete beneath us.

I wrote a message on a loose piece of paper and folded it to the size of my palm.

"Hey, Nance." I whispered.

She turned in her seat, a cute smile on her lips.

"What?" She whispered.

"Can I borrow a pencil?" I asked.

She shook her head and turned to her desk, but I could hear her going through her pencil case. A few seconds later she turned to me with a yellow pencil in her hand, her arm stretched toward me. As I took the pencil from her, I pressed the note into her hand. Her eyes widened and then she composed herself and turned back to face Mr Buell who was sternly looking over at us.

The message read: *Meet me in the bathroom.* I knew she would.

I considered Nancy's thin thighs wrapped around my hips but then the feel of Jude's thicker thighs halted any thoughts of Nancy. Before I went all the way with Nancy, I decided that I had to try at least once more time with Jude.

...

Nancy and I met up in the bathroom – a place which was to me completely foreign until Amy had brought me into one of the stalls so that she could give me my birthday present (which was not as innocent as it sounded). The room at present smelled lightly of cheap perfume – nothing my mom would ever consider wearing in her lifetime. And it was empty. The perfect place to make my move.

I leant into her space but was stopped by her thin hand, so much thinner than mine and soft too, as soft as fur. Despite the way she had smiled as I led her here, her voice was worried.

"I've uh, heard some things." She said as she leant back on the sink with arms crossed.

"What things?" I asked before I bit my lip.

Her eyes darted down to my mouth and resisted the smirk which was so desperate to spread over my lips.

"About you and Judy Holland. She's my best friend's sister, you know." Nancy said as she dragged her eyes back up to mine.

"Oh, her? What've you heard?" I said, acting nonchalant when really I could hear my heartbeat pounding in my ears.

"That there's something going on." Nancy's lips settled into a straight line as her head tilted.

"Yeah?" I asked.

"Yeah. Which would give me plenty of reason to stop what we... whatever we're doing." Nancy shrugged.

"Look, I've just been helping her study." I said as I came to stand in front of her.

"Study? *You've* been helping her... *study*?" She said as her head tilted away from me.

"Why do you say it like that?" I asked.

Because you're dumb was written in Nancy's raised brow.

"Nance, she said she needed help. And I'm a nice guy. Couldn't say no." I said as I placed my hands either side of her hips on the sink.

"You're anything but nice, Steve Harrington." She smiled before her features quickly dampened again. "I heard you made out with her at Tina's party."

"Yeah. We did." I nodded, knowing this was something I couldn't lie about – there were too many people at that party who knew the truth. Granted, there were no witnesses of our kiss, but almost everyone there had seen us enter the bathroom together.

"So why help her study? Wouldn't that be weird?" She asked.

"I already told you: I'm a nice guy." I smiled. "Why shouldn't I help some girl who has a crush on me?"

"Steve!" Nancy said, scandalised.

"That's probably what's going on here though right?" I nodded, thinking back to mine and Jude's fight. "She's just some little girl with a crush."

'I don't see you as some little girl!'

"You don't think she's been lying to Barb then, right? Because Barb told me somethings about last night?"

"Who's Barb?"

"*Barb*? Barbara Holland? My best friend, Jude's sister?" Nancy said, exasperated.

"Oh, yeah. Right, right." I nodded, not really being able to put a name to a face. I wondered if Barb was as pretty as her sister and if they had more sisters and if the whole family were nymphs just waiting to ensnare young boys and cast them aside when they decided they weren't good enough to sleep with.

My jaw gritted as I reminded myself that the reason Jude had told me

to stop was probably more to do with her own insecurities rather than anything to do with me.

"Maybe," Nancy said, "Judy must be telling Barb lies about you. She did it before."

"Huh?" I tilted my head.

"Years ago, when I slept over theirs, I wore one of Judy's dresses." Nancy said, eyes widening with renewed annoyance. "And Judy freaked. She said I stained the dress – which I didn't. She was lying."

"She lied about... a dress?" I said, not really understanding nor caring.

"Yeah!" Nancy nodded. "So it makes sense that she'd lie and tell Barb about going to a party at yours."

I wondered then how much Jude had been telling her sister and if those stories had been embellished at all. Though I couldn't exactly judge – I had lied to Nancy and Tommy and Jude, and I had only felt a pittance of guilt when doing so.

"Oh, Steve." Nancy said as she wrapped her arms around my waist and hugged into me as she apologised.

My head settled into her shoulder and my eyes met my reflection. I didn't recognise who I was; this stranger's eyes were too harsh, his jaw too firmly set. But it was me – I wasn't a stranger.

...

After our last period, Tommy and I exited the school building and began the walk to my car. Jude and Carol were walking through the school parking lot not far ahead, chatting and unaware of Tommy and I.

My heart stopped. Was she telling Carol what happened last night? What if she told the truth and then Carol told Tommy and he called me out on my lie from earlier? My mind settled on playing it cool, but my feet had other plans. I doubled my pace, aiming to catch up with the girls before anything more could be said.

"Why are you walking so fast?" Tommy grabbed onto my jacket arm and used me like a snow dog. "Oh! You wanna catch up to your new slut, do ya?" Tommy said as he eyed Jude.

"Shut it." I said as I shrugged off his arm.

"Aww, what's the matter, pal?" He asked, mocking.

I ignored him the rest of the way over and appreciated him finally closing his goddamn trap once we closed in on the girls.

Tommy wrapped an arm around Carol's shoulders, lightly shocking her before he pressed his lips to hers roughly. I watched as Jude eyed them before she looked at me with a hopeful gleam in her eyes.

I did a double take. A hopeful look in her eyes? My eyes latched onto hers and, yes. Hopeful. But why?

"Hey, Jude." I put my hands in my pockets.

"Hi." She said. "I didn't thank you for driving me home last night, so uh, thank-"

"Have you cooled down now?" I interrupted, aware of our limited time to chat whilst Tommy and Carol were sucking face.

Her mouth was still open as if I'd pressed pause on what she was saying. She composed herself and tucked a strand of copper behind her ear.

"I'm sorry?" She asked, voice small, aware of Tommy and Carol who had stopped making out and now chatted in the background.

"We're fine now? Right?" I asked.

"I think." She muttered.

"Good." I nodded as my arms crossed. "Come over mine tonight."

"I have to study." She said, voice regretful.

"She has to study!" Tommy laughed. Carol wacked his shoulder but

still smirked at his words.

"Come on." I said. "Come over mine. We'll have fun."

Her eyes stopped on Tommy for a second, then on Carol who nodded at her, then her eyes found mine and the passion in them made my breath catch in my throat as if a bee had crawled into my oesophagus.

...

Originally this was supposed to be two chapters (Jude II and then Steve I) but I haven't updated in so long, I thought I'd treat ya by putting them together.

It may seem like I copied the pool/wet clothes plot device which brought Steve and Nancy to *do it* in Season 1 but there's a reason for it. You'll see in a later chapie. Maybe you could even hazard a guess as to why?

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed it!

Any questions or constructive crit. you can PM me or ask in a review :)

Also, any *Crimson Wings* readers: I apologise for the long waits between chapters – uni sucks. Every time I think I have free time, I'm wrong – there's always work to do which can be really fun sometimes but it's also really draining.

Also, do you prefer 2000-3000-word long chapters or 5000-6000? This one was around 7000.

Until next time!